



City of Amesbury Lakes and Waterways Commission

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By City Clerk at 1:21 pm, 9/29/21

Meeting Minutes for 7-15-2021 7:00 PM

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Tom Murphy-Acting Chair, Kate Mallory, Meghan O'Neill, Michael Jewell, Bernadette Lucas, Art O'Dea, Cindy Roberts, Matt Chapin, Peter Manor- City Engineer and Nick Wheeler- Amesbury City Counselor District 4.

Completing Minutes: Meghan O'Neill, Secretary

I. Administrative Business

A. Call to Order

- This meeting is being conducted under the Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, signed into law on June 16, 2021, by Governor Baker. Public access to participate has been made available.
- Tom called meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

B. Review of Past Minutes (May & June)

- Cindy provided a few spelling edits to the May & June meetings.
- Cindy motions to approve, Art seconded this motion. Minutes approved by all present committee members.

II. Engineer's update

A. Engineer's Report

- Pete Manor provided the engineers report to the committee.
- There was 6" of rain over the weekend, almost 1 foot over normal levels. Fielding calls and concerns from citizens about height of water, especially in Lake Attitash but Pete does not feel this is a problem. The water seems higher due to past season droughts.
- Art asked a question about Baily Pond overflowing; the surface water is runoff after any storm. Consistent issues there but still litigation over ownership.

III. Lake Gardner

A. City Council Participation

- Nick Wheeler, City Counselor for District 4 has joined the meeting to discuss residents' concerns and complaints about weed growth in Lake Gardner.
- Nick inquired about what the city can do to mitigate aquatic invasive weeds.
- He is looking to get more information on possibility of water draw down in the winter, this has been done in the past to help with this issue. Previously had to stop this because of endangered mussels.
- In the current Watershed Management Plan there is language stating not to complete draw down, so this would have to go back through Con Comm for approval.

- Cindy provided insight on how Lake Attitash has handled this issue with surveys and weed watcher volunteers as a starting point. Lake Attitash Association raises a significant amount of money from residents around lake to pay for mitigation tactics & treatments.
- Group agrees that completing a waterbody assessment of Lake Gardner with a plan to offer suggestions to the mayor with estimated costs and effort is the best option.
- Group discussed need for city to fund efforts, especially with city beach and resident usage.
- Nick can advocate at city level and work on attention and funding. Need to have more constituents get involved in Lake Gardner Improvement Association to strengthen the voice of that group.
- Pete added that Lake Attitash has had support in past because it is a secondary drinking source for the city.

B. Lake Gardner Beach

- Ongoing discussions about sand and grass ratio for Gardner beach. Still awaiting a 1-time sand replenishment for 2021 season.
- Amesbury Fire Department would like emergency boat ramp at beach as well for rescues. Most likely will not be placed until next year.

IV. Current Business

A. Membership

- Tom will remain acting chair for the time being. Previous conversations with candidate about chair position have fallen through due to other committee commitments.

B. Discuss Meeting with Rob

i. Stormwater Management Plan Revision

- Review of Rob's suggestions from Stormwater Management Plan discussion. Rob's would like L&W to document issues and support DPW when advocating for needs and recommendations, such as a salt disbursement mechanism for around waterways.

ii. L&W Repository for Water Quality Data

- Rob's suggestion is to gather all water quality data and be a repository for this information for the city. Ideally, the committee would provide data for future recommendations and see trends over time. This would include samples and testing.
- Questions about funding for this effort. Also determining what we want to test, locations on waterbody, how often, and who is going to do work. DPW has a small team so staffing issues are also a barrier. Recommendation about bringing resources in to assist. Questions about who manages and oversees data. Questions and concerns about collecting samples as well.

C. Open Space Summit Report

- Tom attended Open Space Summit on behalf of L&W.
- Common themes included: kayaking on Powwow River, clarity and responsibility for maintenance, more public education, and need coordination among the multiple groups that overlap in oversight.
- Also discussed were cyanobacteria concerns, access to water for recreation for residents like Attitash where access is challenging for those that do not live on the waterbody, also climate change impact discussed
- The main message and takeaway being that no one waterway is independent, all are connected.

V. Harbormaster Update

A. Status & Funding

- Harbormaster, funding this as a half time position. Fees to be collected to fund this position.

B. Public Dock on Merrimac Discussion

- Public dock at boat ramp at old Larry' Marina- this is just a ramp with no dock. Suggestion to contact Craig B., potentially in part of their development plan, currently being considered. Enforce excise tax for boat to help with dock funding, boat excise tax.

VI. Discuss Revisions of Waterways Assessment

- Matt did adjust the Powwow River description of remediation tactics. River runs under public properties prior to running under bridges; building inspection handles reviewing this.
- Other additions to this description included weir (barrier dam) being critical for water supply, also that the Powwow was re-routed in 1963 for the build of highway 495.
- Cindy and Meghan to format this document as the next step

VII. Park & Patten Pond Concerns

- Cyanobacteria might be present due to visual green color on ponds. Concerns about children and dogs nearby from committee members. A routine visual inspection is currently conducted.
- Cindy reached out to Ernie to have Patten & Park Pond put on an agenda for discussion at next Board of Health Meeting.
- Kate will email health agent from board of health to do bacteria testing on park ponds.

III. Meeting Adjourned:

Motion to adjourn- Meghan, seconded at 8:59 PM. Next meeting August 19th will be conducted remotely.

Next meeting: August 19, 2021- Remote